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wood and cut out by the aid of a small knife. Thus a drawing and a model of each section are prepared. The plates thus prepared can be put together in the proper order, and fastened by the aid of a hot spatula applied to the edges.

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### SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

—A Scientific Swindler.—A few weeks ago, a man calling himself W. R. Taggart, and claiming to be a member of the Ohio Geological Survey, visited Philadelphia. He called on the principal scientific men of this city, and attended one of the regular meetings of the Academy of Natural Sciences. He seemed to have an extended acquaintance with scientific men, talked very glibly about fossils, and claimed to be writing a report on the Productidæ. He is about 5 feet 8 inches in height, weight, 160 pounds, heavy set, heavy featured, light hair, rather deep set eyes; rather shabbily dressed. He had an adroit way of ingratiating himself into the confidence of his intended victims, and then if he could not steal, he would, under some plausible pretext, borrow valuable books or specimens to take to his hotel and forget to return them. His victims are to be found in nearly every important town in the country. In New York, he was E. D. Strong, of Fort Scott, Kansas, and was employed by the Kansas Pacific railway to collect statistics of coal production. In West Philadelphia he gave his name as E. Douglas, of Columbus, Ohio, member of the State Survey. In Auburn, N. Y., he was a deaf mute under the name of E. D. Whitney, U. S. Geologist, Denver, Col. There he obtained a large quantity of valuable geological books and fossils from Professor Starr. In Harrisburg, Chambersburg, Indianapolis, and Columbus, he was a deaf mute. At Indianapolis he swindled the State Geologist out of \$100 worth of rare books, among them Schimper's "*Palæontologie Vegetale*." He has been permitted access to several museums, public and private, from which he has abstracted valuable specimens and sold them. Any information in regard to the real name and residence of this man is much desired.

P. S.—I hear from Professor Lesquereux that he was at Columbus, that he has swindled some parties at Dayton, O. He got hold of valuable Indian relics from the Cleveland Historical Society worth \$50 or more. From Professor Mees, of Athens, O., he borrowed some valuable physical instruments and sold them, &c., &c.—*F. V. H.*

— We reprint with pleasure the following appreciative notice of the late Mr. Robert B. Tolles, optician, of Boston, which appears in the *English Mechanic*: During several years past he devoted himself to the improvement of the microscope, and to the production of telescopes of unusually short focus, and his work

was characterized by great originality and excellence. He was one of the first opticians in America to construct object-glasses for the microscope on Amici's immersion system, and he succeeded in developing several original formulæ by which he extended the apertures far beyond the limit previously attained in either Europe or America. One of the earliest examples of his work seen in this country was a one-sixth water-immersion object-glass, now in the possession of Mr. Frank Crisp, Secretary of the Royal Microscopical Society, and which was the subject of much discussion in journals devoted to microscopy. Mr. Tolles claimed for this object-glass an aperture which was generally regarded as impossibly large. After much controversy he had the satisfaction of receiving the support of Professor G. G. Stokes, Secretary of the Royal Society, Professor S. Newcomb, Director of the Washington Observatory, and Professor E. Abbe, of Jena University, for the general accuracy of his views. He was an enthusiast in his work, and was almost incessantly engaged in making experimental object-glasses both for the microscope and telescope, many of which exhibited rare qualities, and were eagerly sought for by amateurs of fine work. He made the highest power microscope object-glass produced in America, a water-immersion of  $\frac{1}{25}$  in. in focal length. One of his latest and most successful telescopes was a  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in. portable equatorial of very short focus for Professor Hamilton L. Smith, of Hobart College, who has published his trials of the instrument, proving it to be of exceptionally fine quality. The numerous improvements devised by Mr. Tolles in the construction of the microscope have done much to place American optical workmanship on a par with the best in Europe.

— In the March number of the *AMERICAN NATURALIST*, Mr. Titian R. Peale repeats the old account of the Bowditch islanders being ignorant of fire at the time of their discovery in 1841. While Mr. Peale has the advantage of being an eye witness of what he describes, I would call attention to the fact that the story is discredited by ethnologists, and notably by Tylor. It would seem that the members of the Wilkes' expedition had misinterpreted the expressions of astonishment, for Hale, the ethnologist of the same expedition, gives the native word for fire, while the Rev. Mr. Turner, who visited the island a few years later, gives evidence that they had been acquainted with fire for so long a time that the origin of their knowledge had passed into a myth.—*J. S. King: I y.*

— At a meeting to which the entomologists of Washington and Baltimore were invited, held at the house of Dr. C. V. Riley, in Washington, D. C., on the evening of 29 February, 1884, and presided over by Rev. Dr. John G. Morris, of Baltimore, a resolution was adopted unanimously to establish an entomological society in Washington and vicinity, and a committee was ap-

pointed to draw up the necessary regulations, and to call a future meeting for organization.—*B. Pickman Mann, Secretary.*

— The death of Dr. Hermann Schlegel, director of the Zoölogical Museum of the University of Leyden, is announced. He was born in Saxony. Under his direction the Leyden Museum became one of the most important in Europe, and its collection of skeletons is one of the finest known. It is especially rich in the forms of the Dutch Malaysian colonies. Dr. Schlegel published a number of zoölogical works, among the most important of which are the catalogues of the museum. He was distinguished for his carefulness, and for his extreme conservatism in questions of nomenclature.

— During the past season was founded in Providence the Rhode Island Entomological Society, with Mr. Calder as president, and F. E. Gray, secretary. The society holds monthly meetings.

— Mr. J. L. Wortman has been appointed anatomist of the Army Medical Museum at Washington.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, Feb. 23.—Communications were presented by Elliott Coues on the present state of North American ornithology; by Charles D. Walcott entitled, Further remarks on a rock specimen from Maine, containing corals (with specimen); by Marshall McDonald on natural causes influencing the movements of fish in rivers; and by Lester F. Ward on the diamond willow (with specimen).

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, Feb. 4.—The following paper was presented: The botany, geology and resources of the country traversed by the Northern Pacific railroad (illustrated with lantern), by John S. Newberry.

Feb. 11.—The following papers were read: Theories in regard to the causes of the recent red skies, by John K. Rees; A memorial notice will be read by the secretary of the late vice-president of the academy, Dr. Benjamin N. Martin.

BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY, Feb. 6.—Mr. T. T. Bouvé read a paper on the genesis of the Boston basin and its rock formations; and Professor N. S. Shaler discussed the origin of kames.

Feb. 20.—Dr. T. Sterry Hunt spoke of the Cambrian rocks of North America; and the president described the fossil larvæ from the Triassic rocks of the Connecticut valley.

AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Feb. 18.—Mr. Albert G. Browne, Jr., delivered a lecture entitled, The growing power of chile, in the Pacific (illustrated with views).